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BULLETIN

TO: All Insurers and Insurance Premium Finance Companies Licensed in Alabama
FROM: Walter A. Bell, Commissioner of Insurance
DATE: September 8, 2005
RE: Extension of Grace Period

On August 28, 2005, Governor Bob Riley declared the existence of a state of emergency within the state of Alabama regarding Hurricane Katrina. On several occasions since that date I have personally toured various sites in Mobile and Baldwin Counties and have received reports from other sites in the state. Clearly, we are facing a another great challenge to our state with the effects of Hurricane Katrina.

Thousands of Alabama families and businesses have suffered damages due to the hurricane. In some places, it could be weeks before electricity is restored. Many citizens' homes and businesses were destroyed, precluding the delivery of mail. The situation has created a mass disruption to the normalcy we previously enjoyed.

In the ordinary course of business, insurance companies and premium finance companies send notices to insureds, many of which are required by statute, giving the insured certain limited periods of time within which to pay premium or otherwise respond. Because of the storm damage, disruption of mail and the inability of many of the insureds to stay in their homes, many storm victims are currently unable to timely act or respond and need additional time within which to act in response to these notices.

In light of this, I hereby issue this directive to all property and casualty insurers, all life, health, and disability insurers, and all insurance premium finance companies licensed in Alabama. As to any insurance policy provision, notice, correspondence or law which imposes a time limit upon an insured who is a victim of hurricane damage to perform any act or transmit information or funds with respect to such an insurance contract, which act was to have been performed on or after August 29, 2005, the time limit shall be extended to and including October 29, 2005. This extension of time shall not relieve a policyholder who has a claim from Hurricane Katrina from compliance with the policyholder's obligations to provide information and cooperate in the claim adjustment process relative to the property damage. No interest, penalties, or other charges, shall accrue or be assessed, as the result of the extensions required herein. Interest owed pursuant to premium financing plans with premium finance companies or insurers or their affiliates may be assessed. Any insurer receiving a claim from an insured owing premium may offset the premium due to the insurer or a premium finance company from any claim payment made under the policy.

This directive shall not apply to new policies issued on or after August 29, 2005.